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HOUSING MANAGEMENT BULLETIN

*Editor
Charters*

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OHIO AUTHORITIES CONFER ON MANAGEMENT

As part of the meeting of Ohio housing authorities held on June 9 in Youngstown, and Management Committee of the Ohio Housing Authorities Conference met and submitted to the Conference as a whole the report condensed below:

"Training of Management Personnel--It is recognized that means must be provided for the training of management personnel preliminary to the opening of new housing projects. It is recommended that further consideration be given to the possibility of conducting a Management Training Institute for Ohio Authorities this coming winter, the program to combine class discussion and apprenticeship in existing projects. Such a program, if undertaken, might be developed in cooperation with the new Managers' Division of the National Association of Housing Officials, which is studying plans for preliminary and in-service training. It is further recommended that the proposed Ohio management training program include not only persons who are to manage projects, but also the maintenance superintendents, and tenant relations counselors, since all three positions are essential and highly specialized.

"Responsibility for and Extent of Community Activities--It is recognized that community activities are a natural part of the life of a housing project. Since rents are controlled largely by operating costs, it is desirable to have the community program conducted by some outside agency such as the public recreation department, social agency, or settlement house, rather than by the project management itself. It is felt that the project should supply adequate space for tenant community activities and there should be a person on the management staff with the necessary background to coordinate the program.

"It is recommended that any program of activities be integrated into the program

of the greater community, wherever feasible. It is further recommended that wherever possible, planned quarters for community activities be provided, separate and apart from dwelling buildings.

"Tenant Maintenance and Operating Costs--It is recognized that a larger degree of tenant maintenance must be achieved in the new projects if rents are to be substantially lower. Tenant maintenance of back yards, sidewalks, etc., is much more easily attained in row-house developments than in apartment projects because of the difficulty of clear cut definition of individual tenant responsibility in the latter. Likewise, tenant maintenance should begin at the original opening of the project rather than being instituted later. It is felt that in the development of new projects the management experience of existing projects presents a valuable source of information and suggestions on planning for increased tenant maintenance.

"'Economic Rent' for Employees Living in the Project--Opinion was expressed that charging an employee 'economic rent' to live on the project is really penalizing him for being on the job 24 hours a day and rendering extra service. It would seem that either he should be allowed to pay the same rent as other tenants or he should receive additional compensation in order to meet the economic rent.

"Collective Purchasing by Housing Authorities--The possibility of effecting savings in maintenance and operating costs through combined purchasing of certain major items by a group of housing authorities is worthy of further consideration. Such items as coal and paint, which are used in large quantities, might be procured more advantageously by collective purchasing. This subject, of course, will be more timely after a number of the new projects are in operation."

THE BULLETIN WANTS NEWS, IDEAS, REPORTS AND OTHER MATERIAL ON MANAGEMENT
PLEASE SEND TWO COPIES: ONE TO NAHO, ONE TO THE BULLETIN'S EDITORIAL OFFICE

FIELD NOTES

Facts on management--straight from the field via members of NAHO's Managers' Division--are relayed here.

UNIVERSITY HOMES, Atlanta, Georgia . . .

University Homes, a 675-unit project for Negroes, put into operation in July 1938, when project rents were reduced, an interesting deviation from the usual rent collection method. At that time a two-weeks' security deposit was required of all new tenants moving in and those already in occupancy were required to continue paying former rates until the amount of the deposit had been accumulated. Each tenant is given to understand that the deposit will be applied only to his final two weeks of occupancy. Emphasis is put on the fact that it cannot be used as a cushion against rental delinquency. Unless a delinquent account is immediately adjusted, the deposit is applied as final payment and the tenant is required to vacate at the end of two weeks. It is further understood that once this final period has begun, no reinstatement can be made unless, during the period, full payment of the account plus payment of a new two-week deposit is made.

--STANNARD - KIDD

HILL CREEK HOMES, Philadelphia . . .

There are many evidences here of initiative and imagination. The tenants maintain individual garden plots in which they plant flowers and shrubs. This procedure helps enormously to break up the inevitable monotony of wholesale landscaping and of course stimulates tenant interest in the appearance of the whole project. The manager also maintains a well thought out laboratory on painting. He tests different paints used for various purposes, keeps a record of dates, labor costs, etc., and will soon be in a position to say with some definiteness what type of paint is most satisfactory for any given purpose. --GOLDFELD

OLD HARBOR VILLAGE, South Boston . . .

Mr. Meade, project manager, is convinced of the practicability of tenant maintenance. Although he feels it might have been better to make arrangements for this in advance, he introduced the practice after the project was tenanted and has had almost no unfavorable reaction. Each family is scheduled to clean a portion of the stairs, stairwells, and landings and according to Mr. Meade the plan works satisfactorily. Another matter he feels should be taken up with the tenants before they move in is the problem of equipment maintenance and use. --GOLDFELD

N.Y.C. TENANT SELECTION

The New York City Housing Authority is selecting 5,702 families to occupy its Red Hook and Queensbridge projects. After four years of experience, the Authority has worked out a system of preferential rating that is as objective and impersonal as it can be made while dealing with human factors.

The current controversy between the New York City Housing Authority and the United States Housing Authority over tenant selection (NAHO NEWS August 8, 1939) may result in at least temporary changes in the tenant selection procedure. Methods used, however, are sufficiently sound to merit some description. The tenant selection methods are merely an interpretation of the two fundamental requirements: first, that the family's income shall not exceed amounts specified in the United States Housing Act of 1937 or by administrative orders of USHA or the New York City Housing Authority; and, second, that the families chosen must come from quarters injurious to health, safety, and morals.

If the family's income is such as to make it eligible, a check is made with the Department of Housing and Building and with the inspectors of the New York City Housing Authority to learn if the family's present home is in a substandard building. Building conditions affecting the safety of occupants and those affecting decency, comfort, and health are weighted and added. Such conditions as the presence of illegal fire escapes or the absence of a fire retarding device in stair halls are considered to constitute an unsafe situation. The absence of a private toilet or satisfactory ventilation are considered as conditions making it difficult for the tenant to maintain a decent living standard.

If the family is found eligible on the basis of condition of present housing, more personal or individual factors are weighted according to their relative importance. Some of these are family composition, nearness of project to place of employment, and nature of employment. If the family is still considered eligible after an office interview, a member of the Housing Authority staff calls at the family's home, then with all information on hand, the "preferential rating" is begun. Are present living conditions of a family unusually bad? Is the family making a genuine effort to fight hopeless conditions and maintain a decent home? The rating system seeks to put into measurable form the answers to these and other questions.

During the development of the system, the Authority secured the assistance of Dr. Robert Lynd, well known author of "Middle-town"; Mr. Elmo Roper, whose research firm does the field work for the Fortune Magazine surveys; and Dr. Isador Lubin, Commissioner of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor.

GENERAL NOTES

Most large public housing projects that have been occupied for any time have newspapers published by the tenants. The question of the right of the management to exercise any supervision over subject matter of the project newspaper and the question of the right of the management to insist that material submitted by the management be published without changes have both been raised by actual experiences in a midwest project.

In one case the project newspaper inserted in the space usually reserved for an advertiser the announcement that it would not carry the advertisement because the firm in question was involved in a strike. In another case copy written by the management was published in severely altered form without informing the management that changes were contemplated.

Direct Communication from Management to Tenants

Some project managers, instead of using special space in a project newspaper to communicate messages to the tenants have bulletins published directly by the management. The manager of Parklawn in Milwaukee has issued 32 or more of these bulletins to date. In one of these bulletins the management compliments tenants on the care of their lawns, makes suggestions to those who cut their own lawns, and advises others in maintenance practices that will facilitate cutting of lawns by the management. Attention is also called in this bulletin to the installation and proper use of trash baskets, municipal regulations for cleaning of garbage cans, parking of outsiders' cars in private service spaces, lost and found articles, disinfection, and the fragility of clay roof tiles.

The branch of the Indianapolis Public Library located in the Lockefield (USHA-Federal) project reports greater circulation than all extension branches in the city.

Merit System in New York City

WANTED: Senior Administrative Assistant (Housing Authority) - \$5,000 to \$6,000 per annum - by New York City Civil Service Commission. Applications received until 4 PM August 22, 1939, at 96 Duane Street, Manhat-

tan. Open to all qualified citizens of the United States. Candidates must be residents of New York State at time of appointment. Requirements of training, experience, and personal qualifications are specified by the Commission. Apply for application blanks. Fee of \$5.00 to be paid at time of filing application.

Employment Service

The Toledo (Ohio) Metropolitan Housing Authority is managing Brand Whitlock Homes under lease. A printed sheet was distributed recently which described unemployed tenants. The wording of the leaflet and one case is quoted below:

"It is true that the tenants in the Brand Whitlock Homes must have steady jobs before their application is approved. Yet, it has been found that some of them are working at jobs other than those for which they were trained. Others want part time domestic work.

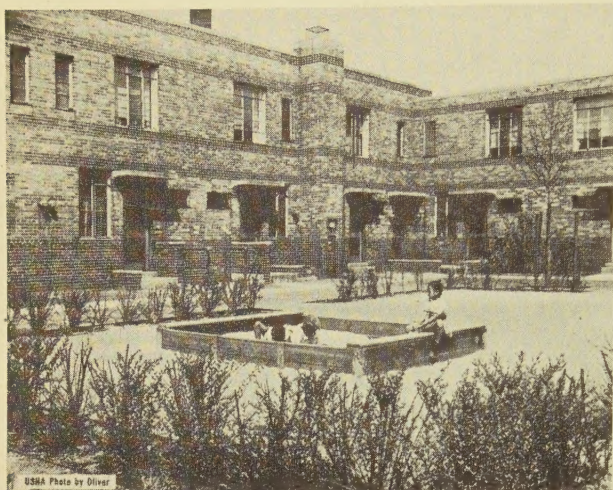
"The Metropolitan Housing Authority has a complete record of the employment, character, etc., of the following persons and would be glad to talk to prospective employers about them. All live in Brand Whitlock Homes.

"Case 1 -- Age 27 -- Man. Two years experience as chauffeur. Has worked at various jobs usually in the building trades. Is at present working on WPA. Speciality-Chauffeur."

Mechanics, machinists, carpenters, laborers, glass-cutters, household help, chauffeurs, salesmen, hotel help, shipping clerks, and general office help--all these positions are listed with the cooperative employment service of the Julia Lathrop Homes, Chicago.

The editor of the Julia Lathrop News conducts the service, depending on employed residents of the project to bring in leads on possible job openings and carrying complete personnel listings of unemployed project tenants. The News boosts the service in its columns and reports its progress, acknowledging personally those residents who have located jobs for the bureau. It is the community's intention to establish the personnel service as a reliable employment source.

The Golden Rule is the basis of appeal to employed tenants for assistance in conducting the service. At the organization of the bureau, representative employed tenants from each area of the project attended a meeting to pledge cooperation and to learn the mechanics of personnel service from a member of the state employment bureau.



USA Photo by Oliver
A PLAY LOT IN THE OUTHWAITE HOMES
DEVELOPMENT OF THE CLEVELAND AUTHORITY

No Personnel Problem Here

A real estate agent who manages a number of low-rent properties recently sent this letter to the superintendent of some of these buildings in Harlem, New York City:

"You have been in the habit of sending in the payrolls signed by the men about two weeks after the closing of the payroll period. The owners have requested a number of times that these be forwarded with our monthly statements, but since they come in so late this is impossible.

"In the future will you please see to it that the sheet is signed by each man and sent to the office immediately following the close of the payroll period."

The following reply was promptly received:

"In review of the above matter and its reflection on important issues, I will in the hereafter send the payroll signatures via mail if personal delivery should seem too remote."

Rent Collections

After nine months' operation Lauderdale Courts and Dixie Homes, public housing projects operated by the Memphis Housing Authority, report rent collections of almost \$100,000 from each project and delinquency of only \$39.50 and \$111.00 respectively.

Of 1662 families that originally moved into the Williamsburg housing project in New York City beginning about October, 1937, only 16 had been required by the management to vacate, according to reports at the end of 1938. Mrs. May Lumsden, Director of the Bureau of Tenant Relations of the New York City

Housing Authority states that families forced to vacate were those whose financial standing was not correctly reported in their original applications.

Lionel F. Artis, manager of Lockefield Gardens, Indianapolis, reported in September that only \$31 in rent had been lost since initial occupancy of the development in February, 1938. There is a waiting list of 471 (presumably acceptable—Editor) families for the 748 dwelling units.

MANAGERS' DIVISION

The proposed constitution and by-laws of NAHO's Managers' Division are now practically in shape for adoption. A few final changes may be made following the meeting on August 14 between representative rural community managers of the Farm Security Administration and Chairman Voigt of the Managers' Division.

Even though the Division is not yet officially organized, its Committee on Training, headed by Abraham Goldfeld met on July 20 in New York City to discuss basic needs for training of management personnel. The Committee outlined three main types of training:

(1) Brief regional seminars to give a minimum of training to personnel for projects now under construction and nearing completion.

(2) In-service training by correspondence or brief conferences for management staffs already on duty.

(3) Long-range programs, possibly as part of university curricula, for preparing potential management personnel.

Major publications of the Managers' Division, including the Housing Management Bulletin, and publications of other special divisions of the Association which may be set up hereafter, will be sent to official housing agencies holding agency type memberships recently established by the Association.

DISTRIBUTION POLICY ON BULLETIN

The HOUSING MANAGEMENT BULLETIN is distributed to members of NAHO who have signified their desire to receive it for a trial period. Copies are available to non-members only by purchase of individual issues at 15¢ each. It is anticipated that the BULLETIN will become shortly the official organ of the Housing Management Division of NAHO, now being organized.